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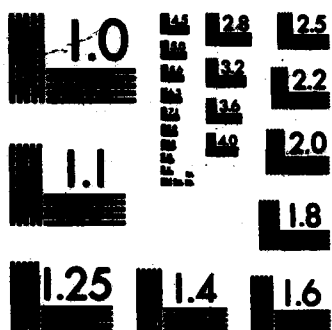
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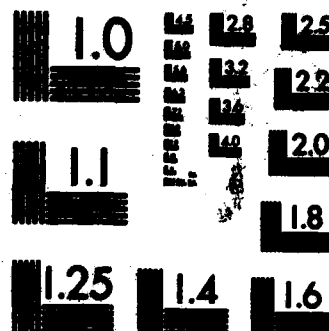
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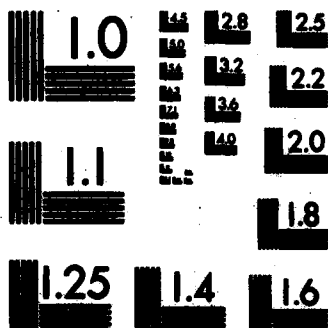
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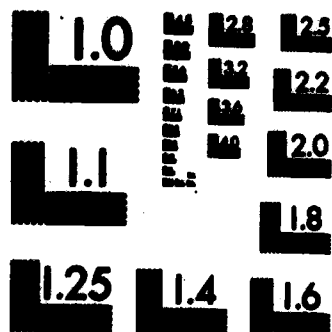
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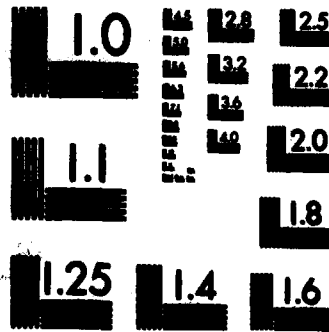
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30 SEPTEMBER 1982

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**TOWARDS A US MILITARY STRATEGY
FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA**

SPECIAL REPORT



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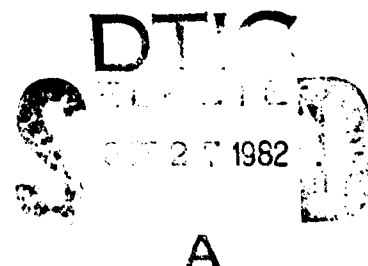
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TOWARDS A US MILITARY STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

by

Keith A. Dunn

30 September 1982



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FOREWORD

This special report addresses US military strategy and Southwest Asia. The author discusses how national interests, objectives, and strategy impact on the development of a military strategy. He analyzes and critiques some of the existing military strategies for Southwest Asia, and, finally, establishes a set of strategic principles which should guide the development of a US military strategy for Southwest Asia.

This special report was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the Army War College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. KEITH A. DUNN joined the Strategic Studies Institute as a civilian in the summer of 1977. Prior to that time he was an Army intelligence officer. Dr. Dunn earned a master's degree and doctorate from the University of Missouri-Columbia in American diplomatic relations. He has contributed chapters to several books on Soviet foreign and defense policy and his articles have appeared in various professional journals including Orbis, Naval War College Review, Parameters, Journal of the Royal United States Institute for Defense Studies, and Military Review.

SUMMARY

Since the fall of the Shah of Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan several strategies for dealing with Southwest Asia have been proposed. They have run the gamut from stockpiling oil to reducing US dependence and making the region less economically important to the United States to threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union should initiate military action. This special report accepts and encourages the pursuit of nonmilitary solutions to achieve US interests and objectives, but it also recognizes that the military strategist's responsibility is to look beyond economic and political alternatives.

The military strategist's job is to suggest to political decisionmakers a military strategy (strategies) within realistic force levels that will deter the Soviet Union and other nations from using military force to threaten US interests and objectives and that will create an environment in which political and economic options can be pursued. This can be done in the Southwest Asian context. However, four principles must be followed. US military strategy for the region must be credible, realistic, distributional, and supportable. The reasons why these principles are important, how previously proposed military strategies failed to fulfill them, and what needs to be accomplished to operationalize these principles into American military strategy are discussed and analyzed.

TOWARDS A US MILITARY STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

To say that a revolution in US thinking about Southwest Asia has occurred since 1978-79 is an understatement. Less than a decade ago no one within the government really believed that US vital interests were involved in the region. Other than periodic naval deployments to the Indian Ocean, US forces were not extensively engaged in the area. Hardly anyone could imagine how or why the United States would ever commit its military forces in combat to defend American interests and objectives there. Similarly, in the academic community, very little attention or thoughtful writing concentrated upon Southwest Asia. To some extent those who were involved in thoughtful research on the area were criticized by their colleagues as concentrating on an area of only marginal importance.

The collapse of the Pahlavi Dynasty and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ended the US decades-old policy of benign neglect. These two "catastrophies" have focused American attention more sharply on the politically unstable region of Southwest Asia than at any other time in the past. Clearly the United States must do things differently if it is to counter the political and military vacuum which has developed in the region since 1978. However, there is still no consensus within the United States, among US allies, or within the region what exactly should occur. Particularly, no agreement exists on what US strategy for Southwest Asia should be.

Part of the problem in developing a military strategy is that few people seem to understand its purpose or how one goes about this process. Often, it seems, some observers see a military strategy as an opportunity to advocate the use of military force. This is not a strategist's primary purpose. Rather, his job is to understand US interests and objectives, to interpret decisionmakers' political guidance, and to construct a viable military program (strategy and forces) which will allow a

political decisionmaker to accomplish his stated objectives within the parameters of the given political guidance. Equally important, but often forgotten, a military strategist's responsibility is to bear bad tidings and to inform policymakers when it is not feasible or practical to develop a military strategy that achieves objectives within available or projected resources.

This paper will focus on developing a military strategy for Southwest Asia. First, it will address US interests and objectives toward the region. Second, the broad principles (best interpreted as enduring statements of political guidance) which have shaped US policy in its post-World War II global competition with the Soviet Union will be discussed. These principles are particularly important because they establish the larger framework of global US interests that a military strategist must consider as he develops a regional military strategy. A military strategy, which may achieve all US interests and objectives in a particular region but contradicts global interests or makes it impossible to achieve objectives in other more important regions, may be self-defeating. Interests are often in conflict with one another. A military strategist, however, must insure that his proposed military strategy does not needlessly exacerbate the inevitable friction that exists and, if possible, resolves or relieves the friction. Third, some of the current military strategies for dealing with US military deficiencies in Southwest Asia will be examined and critiqued. Finally, the paper discusses some strategic guidelines which, if followed, will lead to the development of a military strategy for Southwest Asia that, I believe, is credible, realistic, distributional, and supportable by regional nations and the American public.

Aspects of the Soviet military threat will be considered throughout this paper, but they will not be analyzed in excruciating detail for two reasons. First, several good military assessments have recently been completed emphasizing Soviet opportunities and capabilities, as well as the severe military constraints that Soviet

forces face in the region.¹ Second, the existing and projected military threat is an important input into the development of military strategy (as are technology, opportunity, constraints, etc.), because without a military threat there would be very little need for a military strategy. Nevertheless, the threat alone should not determine a military strategy. A military strategy must be based upon the interaction among interests, objectives, and threats. A major problem in American history, however, is that too often this interaction does not occur. As John Lewis Gaddis has argued so correctly, "threats . . . have been allowed to determine interests, rather than the other way around."² If a strategist allows only the threat to drive his military strategy, he becomes the prisoner of his adversaries' actions. Policy becomes reactive rather than deliberate because the military strategist has no independent standards to measure US security and threats to security against other than the presence or nonpresence of an adversary's forces in a particular area. Therefore, in this paper US interests and objectives will be the framework that guides the development of a military strategy for Southwest Asia. The threat, including Soviet capabilities and limitations, will be developed as required to show how the strategy needs to be operationalized in terms of forces and their deployment.

US INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES

The fundamental building blocks of strategy are the concepts of national interests and specific objectives to support the attainment of national interests. Essentially, four fundamental national interests are common to all nations: survival, protection of territorial integrity, maintenance or enhancement of economic well being, and promotion of a favorable world order. In order of priority, survival and protection of territorial integrity are the most vital national interests, and actions which jeopardize those interests should not be initiated lightly or occur haphazardly.

In most instances there is very little disagreement about national interests. They are stated at such a high level of abstraction that anyone can agree with them. However, one must avoid the temptation to eliminate a step in the strategy process by overlooking the broad national interests and to jump immediately to a discussion of regional objectives that policy and strategy are supposed to obtain. If a strategist fails to maintain a broad perspective--i.e., an awareness of US national interests even if they are stated in a vague and often less than satisfactory manner in Secretary of Defense posture statements, Secretary of State announcements, or even Presidential State of the Union messages--he will often miss how the pursuit of a specific objective or a combination of regional objectives may conflict with broader national interests making the defense of certain regional objectives not worth the risk.

America's primary objective not only in Southwest Asia, but also worldwide, is deterrence of Soviet or Soviet-sponsored aggression. Deterrence is the essential objective because military conflict, involving either the United States or the Soviet Union, or their primary allies' forces, will threaten the achievement of other US objectives in the region. When forces are engaged in conflict, it is difficult--if not impossible--to achieve stability, peaceful solutions to problems, or insure the flow of oil. Moreover, nuclear escalation is a significant risk if deterrence fails in Southwest Asia.

Traditionally, US interests are best served by an international order of stability. As a result, a second major US objective in Southwest Asia has been the promotion of peaceful solutions to the myriad of historical, cultural, religious, ethnic, ideological, and economic differences which make the region endemically unstable. The pursuit of this objective serves two specific purposes. First, it can help the United States avoid the unwanted situation of perhaps choosing between parties in conflict and adversely affecting other interests and objectives. In

Southwest Asia, the classic situation that Washington wants to avoid is another Arab-Israeli war. Such an event is a no-win situation for the United States. Whichever side it supports will have an adverse impact on other important objectives in the region. Second, peaceful solutions to regional problems limit Moscow's opportunities to expand its access. The Soviet political system offers few attractive features for the Arab nations of the region. The Southwest Asian regimes are predominately monarchical, authoritarian, and Islamic, with few long-term commonalities with communism or the Soviet Union. As a result, Moscow's primary means of access to the region is its military power, particularly arms sales. To the extent that the United States successfully can pursue peaceful solutions to the regional problems confronting Southwest Asia, it supports the process of evolutionary versus revolutionary political change, limits the need of regional states to resort to violence, curtails Soviet access and influence, and forces Moscow to compete in areas (such as political and economic support) where it has few strong cards to play.

A third increasingly important objective is to insure that Middle East/Persian Gulf oil will be available to the United States and, particularly, its allies. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter stated that the United States would use "any means necessary, including military force" to secure its and allies' interests in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region.³ A change of administrations has led to no lessening of importance of this objective. If anything, the Reagan Administration is committed to creating the military teeth that will allow the Carter Doctrine rhetoric to be operationalized.⁴

As we evaluate the importance of maintaining the flow of oil, one significant caveat is important to keep in mind. It is hard to imagine, as some have suggested, that by the end of the century the United States may no longer require Persian Gulf oil.⁵ However, even if this did occur, continued access to oil will remain as an

indirect vital interest of the United States.⁶ If the flow of Persian Gulf oil ceased or the price became prohibitive, the United States would be affected but, more significantly, the economies of Western Europe and Japan could be totally disrupted, given their energy dependence upon Persian Gulf oil. An economic collapse within Europe and Japan would make it virtually impossible to achieve the US national interest of maintaining or enhancing the US economic well being. A major economic disintegration in either Western Europe or Japan also could have political repercussions impacting on US world-order interests. However, America's most vital interests--protection of territorial integrity and survival--would not be affected by a reduction or even a cut-off of the flow of Middle Eastern oil. This is an important distinction to keep in mind when we later examine alternative military strategies for Southwest Asia and propose a military strategy to obtain US interests and objectives.

Fourth, since the end of World War II, containment of communism has been a US objective. In other parts of the world during the 1950's and 1960's, containment of monolithic communism drove US thinking. However, in Southwest Asia the primary concern always has been the Soviet Union, given its proximity to the region. The United States is interested in keeping the USSR physically out of the region. Washington has used a variety of political, economic, and military instruments over the years to limit the expansion of Soviet political and military influence in the region and to insure that US allies and other friendly states in the region can resist Soviet coercive efforts.

Fifth, the United States is committed to the political survival and security of Israel. This objective more than any other demonstrates how the pursuit of one regional objective can conflict with the achievement of others. In addition, it indicates why a strategist cannot become too myopic and think of only one geographic area in his development of a military strategy. For the purist, Israel is in the

Middle East not Southwest Asia. However, there is no doubt that the Arab nations of Southwest Asia perceive that US support for Israel is out of proportion to America's "true interests" in the region (access to oil, survival of moderate Arab governments and containment of Soviet expansion). A primary challenge for a military strategist is the requirement to develop a strategy that balances the objectives of maintaining Israel's security while still maintaining good political relations with the Arab states and access to oil.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

Once interests and objectives have been determined, the next step in the strategic process is to develop a national strategy: a plan for how to employ a nation's military, economic, political, and psychological tools to achieve its interests and objectives. In a perfect world, the president or someone acting for him, possibly the National Security Council, would provide rather specific policy guidance for the degree of emphasis each one of the tools of national power should receive. Also, those charged with developing specific military, political, economic, and psychological strategies as inputs to the national strategy would be told, before developing their strategies, what risks the national command authority would be willing to accept to achieve US interests and objectives.

Unfortunately, all strategists must deal with an imperfect world. In the specific case of developing a military strategy, traditionally in the United States, the military strategist does not receive the specific policy guidance that he wants so badly and in fact needs until there is a crisis or a real possibility that US forces may need to be deployed.⁷ The reasons for this disconnect are numerous, but General Maxwell D. Taylor has summarized some of the most important causes:

For one thing, busy senior officials capable of providing it are usually so engrossed in day-to-day tasks that they have little leisure for serious thought about the future beyond the next federal budget. Also, it is a risky business for a senior politician to put on public record an estimate of future events which, if wide of the mark, would provide ammunition to his adversaries.

Similarly, a president who announces specific policy goals affords the public a measure of his failure if he falls short of his hopes. Hence it is common practice for officials to define foreign policy goals in the broad generalities of peace, prosperity, cooperation, and good will--unimpeachable as ideals but of little use in determining the specific objectives we are likely to pursue and the time, place, and intensity of our efforts.⁸

This paper accepts Taylor's observations as an inevitable, but lamentable, situation with which a military strategist must deal. This does not mean, however, that a military strategist has no concepts of political guidance to build a strategy upon. Several enduring principles have guided US policy in the post-World War II period: superpower conflict avoidance, forward defense, security based upon alliances and coalitions, a desire to contain conflicts at the lowest level of violence as is possible, and primacy of domestic issues. Until these specific principles are rejected, they must be used as a basis for the development of military strategies in peacetime.

Because of the risk of nuclear escalation, the most enduring strategic principle that has guided not only American but also Soviet thinking and actions in the post-World War II period is superpower conflict avoidance. Both nations have acted with extreme caution when it appeared that their military forces might come into direct military contact. The inability to predict with any degree of accuracy what might occur if American and Soviet forces confronted each other has been sobering for Soviet and American policymakers alike. It should continue to affect and constrain US and USSR actions for the foreseeable future.

Forward defense and security based upon alliances are two other principles which have guided US policy in the postwar period. Over the years, the need for stationing US troops overseas has been questioned (e.g., the 1970's Mansfield amendments, the Carter decision to withdraw US forces from Korea (which was ultimately reversed), and currently the revival of interest to examine the need for US forces in Europe). This debate over forward deployment (as opposed to forward

defense) will continue to be raised, particularly during years of domestic economic hardship. However, the idea of forward defense--facing an enemy somewhere else and not on US territory--should continue to be a major element of US strategic thinking.

Any future debate over forward defense will essentially occur over how the United States can best accomplish it. Should the US political and military strategy be based primarily on an alliance strategy or should the emphasis be upon going it alone to the best of US abilities? Obviously, an unilateralist strategy places fewer restrictions upon the United States and makes a strategist's job easier. In an alliance all participants sacrifice a degree of sovereignty and independence of action because of the need to compromise and the requirement of the allies to agree that each one's interests are affected to the same degree before they are willing to commit forces to combat. However, in the final analysis, the United States has few viable options but to continue an alliance strategy.

The financial cost of trying to go it alone would be prohibitive. Moreover, it is impossible to return to a bygone era of fortress America. The United States can no longer--if it ever could--feel safe and secure in a world in which many nations are hostile or even neutral toward it. World order, economic well being, and even territorial integrity and survival interests would be threatened if Americans had to face a hostile world alone. Through alliances the United States is not only defending allies' interests, it is also defending those American interests and objectives which are the most vital to the United States. Also, effective alliance structures are force multipliers enabling the United States militarily to balance Soviet military power. The United States needs allies' political support to achieve its military objectives.

A military strategist's recognition of the importance of alliances to achieve US interests and objectives, however, must be balanced by his awareness that domestic, not foreign or security, issues are of primary importance to the American

public. Except on rare occasions, presidents are elected because of their domestic programs. Incumbents may be defeated or, as in the case of Lyndon Johnson, forced to withdraw from running for office because their foreign policy or security programs have an adverse impact on domestic issues. But, domestic issues, interests, and policies are the most critical concerns of the American public. Therefore, a strategist must recognize how his proposed military strategy may affect domestic issues and impact on political decisionmakers' willingness to support his military strategy.

As Amos Jordan and William J. Taylor have recently argued, Americans are generally an impatient lot and are irritated by complex issues and solutions:

Americans believe that, with a little common sense and know-how, things can be done in a hurry. Neither protracted, limited war nor costly, sustained programs for military preparedness fit this temper of American mind. The initial public reaction to the necessity for the occupation of Germany following World War II was disillusionment; after all, the war was over. Stalemate at Korea's 38th parallel brought a similar public reaction in the 1950's.

Impatience, as one of several variables of mood, combined with the aversion to violence, is highly likely to produce public outcry for cessation of American involvement in a prolonged conflict demanding self-sacrifice unrelated to any clear vision of overriding national interest.⁹

The strategist who asks a political policymaker to overlook these American tendencies does not serve his country well, but equally important he probably insures that his military strategy ultimately will fail.

Finally, as was noted earlier, the primary US objective is deterrence, from limited conflicts through strategic nuclear war. In pursuit of this objective a primary principle, which traditionally has guided US security policy is the desire to limit the scope, intensity, and duration of conflicts when they occur. Particularly, US policymakers have been interested in rapidly containing and terminating conflicts which involve the Soviet Union or its allies' forces. Escalation--either

vertically toward nuclear weapons or horizontally by geographic expansion of a conflict--is always a risk when Soviet forces are involved. Traditionally this is a risk that American policymakers have wanted to avoid.

There are some indications that the Reagan Administration is not inclined to limit the geographic focus of conflicts when the USSR is involved. The merits and demerits of this approach will be examined in succeeding sections.

ALTERNATIVE MILITARY STRATEGIES

A variety of nonmilitary proposals have been suggested for dealing with US political-military deficiencies in Southwest Asia, such as stockpiling oil to reduce dependency and seeking political solutions to regional problems thus limiting Soviet opportunities to meddle in Southwest Asian domestic politics. Few military strategists would argue against pursuing nonmilitary solutions to achieve US interests and objectives. In fact, the military community is one of the strongest supporters of stockpiling oil.

The military strategist may very well encourage a decisionmaker to use whatever nonmilitary instruments that are available to achieve US interests and objectives. However, in the final analysis, a military strategist's job is to develop a strategy and the forces that militarily will deter an aggressor and encourage adversaries to compete with the United States through political and economic means. He also is charged with the responsibility to develop a program to secure US interests by force when other means fail. While the military strategist can agree with those who see that direct Soviet military actions are the least likely threats and that the most pressing problems within Southwest Asia are internal threats to authority, ethnic clashes, endemic regional problems, etc., which beg for political and economic solutions, he cannot stop there if he is to do his job properly. Ultimately, the military strategist must answer two questions which separate him from the diplomat and the academic. The first is more long term and a force development

question: What strategy, types of forces, and deployment will deter the Soviet Union from using military force to threaten US interests and objectives? The second is a more short-term operational question: If deterrence fails, how does the United States then achieve its interests and objectives?¹⁰ This responsibility to look beyond deterrence is why the various economic and political solutions will not be addressed. Rather, we will now turn to examine and critique four major military strategies for Southwest Asia that have been proposed since the fall of the Shah and the invasion of Afghanistan: nuclear escalation in theater, conventional tripwire, conventional defense, and geographic escalation outside the theater.

Nuclear Option

In physics there is a principle that for every action there is an equal reaction. While a comparison between physics and security affairs is not the best analogy, given bureaucratic inertia that can impede change within organization, nations and individuals still tend to overreact when the status quo is altered radically. Before balance returns to policy or perceptions become more in tune with reality, the pendulum quite often swings between extremes.

In the case of Southwest Asia, one initial reaction to the collapse of the "two pillar" strategy was a nuclear option. A Department of Defense study written to describe US military options in the region after the fall of the Shah and before the invasion of Afghanistan, which was leaked to the press, suggested as one option that "we might have to threaten or make use of tactical nuclear weapons" to stop a major Soviet invasion of Iran. According to press reports, the idea was to use nuclear weapons in the mountainous regions along the Soviet border and, if that failed, in the Zagros Mountains further to the south of Iran in an attempt to block the advance of Soviet conventional forces.¹¹

The primary assumption that pushed the DOD study team to consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons was a belief that the USSR could get forces into the area much faster than could the United States. Faced with this belief and the political situation in Iran in near total chaos during 1979, the nuclear threat option appeared to be one way to fulfill Carter doctrine pledges and maintain deterrence.

Conventional Tripwire

A second alternative--conventional tripwire--is an attempt to avoid the obviously bad connotations associated with early use of nuclear weapons and crossing the nuclear threshold. A conventional tripwire force essentially proposes to raise the stakes and risks for Soviet aggression by getting US forces to an area rapidly and placing the escalation burden upon Moscow. A conventional tripwire would not be able to defeat Soviet ground force divisions moving out of the Transcaucasus, North Caucasus, and Turkistan military districts. Its objective would be to deter Moscow from giving the march order by creating a force that makes an attacker "believe that the attacked may retaliate. That is enough to deter."¹²

In an attempt to develop a strategy for the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force which would guide force development planning, Kenneth Waltz articulated one of the better conventional tripwire philosophies. Waltz advocates the creation of an "asset-seizing, deterrent force" in contrast to a "war-fighting, defensive force" because a force designed for deterrence would be smaller, more mobile, less dependent upon allies, and thus better able to deploy rapidly. According to Waltz, in deterrence, getting there first is more important than having the ability to defeat a determined foe:

Some depreciate the RDF by saying that 'it will get there first with the least.' But only that is required in order to implement a deterrent strategy against the Soviet Union. The effectiveness of a deterrent strategy depends on the credibility of theater and not on the ability to defend a position by force. Thus, the 4,500 American troops in West Berlin cannot defend the city; they are there for the sake of deterrence.¹³

Moreover, with a deterrent force and a strategy with deterrence as its primary objective, Waltz claims that the United States can avoid the problem of needing allies to fulfill US objectives and interests, except for limited requirements. Collective action, he recognizes, contributes to deterrence by raising the risk for an aggressor. However, achieving unanimity within alliances is very complicated because allies seldom view threats in the same manner. When allies do not act together, deterrence may be adversely affected by reducing the credibility of the threat or the deterrent response. As a result, Waltz favors a strategy which would require little direct participation of allies in military operations.

Finally, Waltz argues that an "asset-seizing, deterrent force" or conventional tripwire would also deter the United States from proposing military options to solve essentially economic and political problems. Lacking strong enough forces to defeat the USSR, the US military would not be tempted "to counsel preventive war" when it has a temporary military advantage. This constraint, Waltz believes, is an extremely important reason to choose a deterrent rather than a defensive force. If the military community has the capability to respond at will to Soviet threats, Waltz fears that the military's institutional bias will result in more rather than fewer military options being presented to the President.¹⁴

Conventional Defense

A third alternative is what Albert Wohlstetter has called "meeting a conventional threat on its own terms."¹⁵ The concept is essentially the opposite of Waltz's deterrence approach, calling for defending US interests and objectives in the region by having adequate forces available to defeat a Soviet aggression.

Two major proponents of this approach--Jeffrey Record and Albert Wohlstetter--differ widely on how to carry out a conventional defense. Record emphasizes a naval/maritime orientation with an emphasis upon maneuver warfare rather than a "firepower/attrition approach."

What is needed is a small, agile force, based at and supplied entirely from the sea. The model must be Sir John Moore's (and later Wellington's) sea-based strike force hovering off the Iberian peninsula, not Westmoreland's sprawling military bureaucracy in Vietnam.¹⁶

Wohlstetter favors the increase of naval presence in the Indian Ocean. However, he does not believe that a total naval/maritime orientation would be balanced or adequate. He proposes a firepower/attrition strategy that would rely heavily upon the air force to interdict Soviet troop movements.¹⁷

Wohlstetter and Record also differ on the importance of allies to any US military strategy in Southwest Asia. After making the obligatory bows toward the importance of allies, Record adopts a unilateral intervention approach because, as he argues, "to stake the success or failure of an intervention force on the momentary political whims of local regimes in the Gulf serves the security interests of neither the United States nor the Western world as a whole."¹⁸ On the other hand, allied support--particularly an ability for American planes to stage from air bases in Turkey--is critical to Wohlstetter's conventional defense proposal.

Despite these important differences, the advocates of a conventional defense agree on four major issues. First, keeping the oil flowing is significant, but keeping the Soviet Union out of the region is more important. Second, to "prevent the region from becoming forcibly dominated by a single power, be that power the Soviet Union, Iraq, or some other Gulf state," requires a forcible entry capability and a force strong enough to defeat and repel an aggressor.¹⁹ Third, they want to defeat an aggressor in Southwest Asia, but at the same time be prepared to respond in other theaters if the conflict should escalate. Fourth, strong conventional defenses will keep the nuclear threshold high.

Geographic Escalation

The final alternative proposed in recent years is geographic escalation or war-widening. While this idea initially appeared in the later stages of the Carter

Administration when it was searching for a way to execute the Carter doctrine, it has become most identified with the Reagan Administration's defense policies.

A strategy of geographic escalation or war-widening essentially is based upon five major premises or assumptions. First, the loss of strategic nuclear superiority has removed a major deterrent to Soviet aggressive behavior. As a result, the USSR is viewed as more brazen and willing to initiate military actions to threaten US interests at any other time. Also, the loss of nuclear superiority is supposed to suggest that the United States has lost escalation dominance meaning that the threat of nuclear conflict may no longer be perceived as a real threat by Moscow.²⁰ Second the points of most likely conflict with the USSR in the coming decade--the period when US conventional and strategic nuclear vulnerability is supposed to be greatest--are in areas nearer to the Soviet Union than the United States. Here, the most often cited example is Southwest Asia. Third, many observers believe that any conflict with the USSR--particularly a naval conflict--will automatically escalate to global warfare.²¹ Thus, the United States must begin with an assumption of global warfare and plan how to fight such a conflict. As Fred Ikle wrote just before he joined the Reagan Administration, the Soviets need to be faced with the possibility that "the first campaign does not guarantee a successful ending for a global war."²² Fourth, since the USSR is primarily a continental power, the best way to execute a war-widening strategy is through the use of US naval power and exploitation of US naval technological superiority over the Soviet Union. Fifth, given the buildup of Soviet conventional capabilities over the last 20-25 years and the decline in the American nuclear deterrent, the United States can no longer automatically assume that US forces, even in conjunction with its allies, will be able to defeat the USSR at the primary point of tension.

Geographic escalation's appeal rests on its promise to increase US options and deal with the issue of allies being reluctant to support US initiatives in

times of crisis. With geographic escalation US policymakers are no longer supposed to be tied to responding to the event and place of Soviet aggression. Rather than reacting, advocates of war-widening see the strategic initiative being returned to the United States. For example, some advocates of geographic escalation have suggested that, if the Soviet Union moved toward Persian Gulf oil, the United States could seize important Soviet outposts, such as Angola or Cuba. Others have suggested that the United States might consider carrying the battle to Soviet territory to blockade the Kola Peninsula or Vladivostok if the USSR should initiate further aggressive actions in Southwest Asia and the United States lacked the military power to stop Soviet forces at the initial place of aggression.

War-widening with a naval emphasis is supposed to handle reluctant allies in one of two ways. First, the Navy's desire to create a 600-ship fleet formed around 15 active nuclear carrier battle groups is essentially a unilateral, non-alliance approach. With 15 carrier battle groups and other fleet improvements, implicitly—if not explicitly—Secretary of Navy John Lehman is arguing for a force that could fight and defeat the Soviet Union in "a number of significant and widely separated regions--probably simultaneously--" without the need for naval assistance from allies.²³ According to Lehman, the Navy that he hopes to create "will be strong, flexible, offensive, and global--and it will possess unquestioned maritime superiority over any opponent or combination of opponents which might seek to prevent our free use of the seas."²⁴ Second, the current Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Francis J. "Bing" West, Jr., argued, before taking office in the administration, that a naval oriented war-widening strategy would force America's NATO allies to participate in a global conflict. In his view, a Soviet move toward the Persian Gulf oil would most likely result in US and European mobilization and a SACEUR call for reinforcement of NATO because of the threat of a global war. This set of circumstances would draw--almost inevitably it

sees in the West's view--NATO into a war that would expand its traditional military boundaries of responsibility beyond the Tropic of Cancer:

US response to Soviet action in the Gulf should be one of horizontal escalation. In the global balance, the Soviet gain in the Gulf is overshadowed by the mobilization of the West and by the naval campaign. NATO reinforcement requires movement at sea. Unlike land and tacair forces, the oceans are a medium without boundaries for separating antagonists. NATO agreement to reinforcement is an agreement to naval combat. NATO cannot stay out of a US-Soviet war because the naval threads are too intertwined.²⁵

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE SOUTHWEST ASIAN MILITARY STRATEGY

To have a reasonable chance of success, any proposed military strategy must satisfy four important criteria. It must be credible, realistic, distributional, and supportable, not only in military terms, but also by allies and the American public. The four alternatives just discussed accomplish some of these criteria, but not all. In this section, we will critique the existing alternatives suggesting where they fall short and propose initiatives that would make US military strategy for Southwest Asia credible, realistic, distributional, and supportable.

Credibility

Credibility is the capacity to be believed; to suggest actions, proposals, strategies, etc., that others (friends and foes) will accept as plausible. Contrary to the arguments posed by White, the naval unilateralists, and conventional defense advocates such as Record, there are four major reasons why a credible strategy for Southwest Asia must begin with the basic principle that US actions must be part of a collective response. First, as was noted earlier, alliances can adversely impact on deterrence by reducing the assurance of action. However, US policy in the post-World War II period has been based on a coalition or alliance approach to security problems. In fact, one of the strongest cards that the United States has always claimed to hold in its competition with the Soviet Union is that its allies were strong, while Soviet allies have traditionally been political, economic, and military

drains upon the Soviet Union. What the United States loses in flexibility by approaching problems in a collective manner is more than offset by the political, economic, and military contributions which allies make.

Second, while Americans generally find it hard to believe, there is a strongly held belief among some oil-producing states that the primary purpose of the RDJTF is not to protect them, but is to seize oil in a crisis. A policy of collective response will not eliminate these concerns but, as Dov Zakheim argued, it "would mitigate some of the political sensitivities that the deployment of American forces in the Indian Ocean arouses among littoral states."²⁶

Third, a commitment to collective response offers to create geographic escalation in ways more credible to a Soviet defense planner than would the threat that the United States would seize Angola, Cuba or attack critical vulnerabilities if Soviet forces moved toward oil facilities. With French forces in Djibouti and British and Australian naval forces in the Indian Ocean, Moscow already faces the risk that any military actions in the region could not be localized. Whether it wants to or not, any Soviet military actions could draw extraregional nations other than the United States into a military conflict to protect forces already in the area. Expansion of existing combined military exercises among US, British, and Australian forces in the Indian Ocean, particularly if augmented by the formal participation of French forces, not only would enhance "the prospect of coordinated crisis response by the states involved" but also would complicate Soviet risk and military-balance assessments thereby contributing to deterrence.²⁷

Fourth, contrary to the claims made by naval unilateralists and geographic escalationists, even a war-widening strategy would require support from other nations. No doubt the Soviet Union faces a variety of significant military vulnerabilities which can and should be exploited in the event of deterrence failure. One of the more often cited Soviet naval vulnerabilities is the lack of uninhibited

access to the open seas which makes the Soviet navy susceptible to choke point interdiction. Each of the USSR's four separate fleets must transit critical international straits and, if those straits were closed, the Soviet naval threat not only in Southwest Asia but worldwide would be virtually nonexistent, except for a brief war at sea. The problem is that now and in the future the United States requires not just allied military support but more importantly it needs allied political support if it has any hope of sealing the critical straits. Even if the United States had clear naval superiority over the Soviets, could fight simultaneously in multiple theaters, and would not need allies' military assistance as it does now to close various straits, without allied political consent those capabilities could not be executed in time of crisis. If Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom refused to allow US forces to use facilities and air and naval vessels to base out of their countries, it is hard to imagine how the United States could close the G-I-UK gap. Likewise, if Japan would not allow US forces based in Japan to participate in operations to seal the Sea of Japan, how could the United States effectively deny Soviet access to the Pacific? The United States would need similar positive political decisions from Turkey and Sweden and Denmark before it could attempt militarily to close the Dardanelles or the Kattegat and Skagerrak areas.

Realistic Assumptions

A viable military strategy must be built on realistic assumptions. In the case of Southwest Asia one of the most important assumptions that will affect the development of a strategy and the forces to support it is the issue of strategic warning. If the assumption is that little or no strategic warning will exist, then the strategist is driven toward having sufficient forces in the region deployed well forward to defend until reinforcements arrive. On the other hand, an assumption that warning will exist makes it less of an imperative to have ground forces in place because time (how much admittedly is an issue of debate) to bring forces into

a region both to signal commitment as well as to defend objectives should exist. Also, an assumption that sufficient strategic warning will exist to deploy forces into a region reduces the necessity to threaten nuclear escalation.

In the case of Southwest Asia, US military strategy should be driven by an assumption that strategic warning will exist. Planning for strategic warning is a political necessity. In most states of the region, a US ground force presence or even a large support presence to build the infrastructure for air bases or ground force staging areas would cause domestic political problems for the host nation, contribute to regional stability, and invite exactly the types of Soviet political and military meddlesome behavior that the United States wants to avoid. On the other hand, planning for strategic warning is a militarily realistic assumption. Soviet ground and naval forces in the region are not structured or postured for a "no-notice attack" or "bolt from the blue" scenario.²⁸

The low readiness status of the 25 Soviet ground force divisions in the Caucasus, Transcaucas, and Turkestan military districts means that Soviet defense planners would have to augment those divisions with significant numbers of personnel and trucks from the civilian economy to make them combat ready. More than 60 percent of those divisions are Category III in readiness status. If one assumes that on any given day Category III divisions are manned between 25 and 33 percent, the Soviets would have to mobilize approximately 200,000 reservists to bring all divisions up to strength. This is no easy task, despite the claims of some advocates of Soviet short-warning attack scenarios, since Soviet record keeping on reservists is apparently not as good as we have assumed in the past.²⁹ Bringing divisions up to strength and "marrying" personnel with equipment in storage and trucks from the civilian economy takes time. Moreover, personnel and equipment do not make an effective military unit. To do the latter requires some training to create unit cohesion. This is probably why in each of the recent occasions that the USSR has

used its military forces as a blunt instrument to attain its interests and objectives—Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan—the Kremlin has taken months to build and prepare its forces before they were used.

Similarly, Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean suggest that Moscow believes that a sufficient period of preconflict crisis would allow it to realign its naval forces and create a more favorable naval warfighting capability in the region. At first glance, the normal peacetime deployment of 20 Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean is impressive. However, normally only 4-5 of the ships are surface combatants. In addition, the Indian Ocean squadron has very little offensive capability, power projection, or staying power. The squadron normally spends most of its time at anchor off the coast of Socotra Island performing surveillance and intelligence functions. As Bruce Watson wrote in a recent book on the Soviet navy, the Indian Ocean squadron's "mission is primarily political."³⁰ If the USSR would have any hope of neutralizing US carrier task groups that traditionally have been deployed to the Indian Ocean when some regional crisis erupts to threaten US interests and objectives, the squadron would have to be reinforced and, as in the case of ground forces, this takes time. Assuming a cruising speed of 18 knots, it would take the Soviet navy 18 days to deploy ships from the Pacific Fleet. Submarines would take even longer. Deployments from the Northern Fleet via the Atlantic and Cape of Good Hope—a distance of 14,000 miles—would take more than 35 days. It would require nearly 30 days to reinforce the Indian Ocean squadron from the Mediterranean or Black Sea Fleet via a route through the Strait of Gibraltar and around the Cape of Good Hope. Moscow could reduce the deployment times from the Mediterranean or Black Sea if it used the Suez Canal. In a crisis, however, the latter route would be an extremely risky venture given the narrow confines of the Canal, the large French presence at Djibouti, and the poor political-military relations that currently exist among Moscow, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

All of this suggests that the United States will have some strategic warning. How much time, and, if the US or regional nations will react to the warning, is the critical unanswerable question. However, if the political will does exist, for the United States to react effectively it must have the capability to deploy forces--ground as well as naval and air forces--once deterrence fails. In the case of naval strategic mobility forces (which are most important to the Army), funds for building modern logistic support ships appear in the "out" years of the Reagan proposed 5-year defense budget.³¹ Unfortunately, the history of such programs actually being funded when it comes time to request the money is not good. Conversely, requests for two nuclear aircraft carriers appears in the FY 83 budget. A 600-ship navy with 15 carrier battle groups would provide the United States with a capability to deploy an attack carrier in the Indian Ocean without drawing down forces from other theaters as now must occur. This is an admirable goal. However, in a resource constrained environment when defense budgets and particularly the survivability of large carriers are being questioned not only in Congress but also by serious students of naval strategy, it might be more practical to reexamine the priority of some US defense programs before we invest \$12-15 billion per carrier task group. Specifically, in the case of Southwest Asia more attention should be given to sea and air mobility assets. Logistics and strategic mobility questions are not high visibility projects in comparison to \$3.5 billion for aircraft carriers, \$12-15 billion for carrier task groups, \$30-40 billion for the B-1 program, or \$35-50 billion for the MX program. However, in the long run, the ability to get divisions from the east coast of the United States to the Persian Gulf within two weeks and to sustain them may contribute more to deterrence than any of the above programs because it presents the USSR with the possibility that it would face US forces on the ground and those forces would not be a weak tripwire.³²

Distribution

The idea of distribution is a close corollary to establishing realistic assumptions. A perfect military strategy--even if that were possible to obtain--cannot achieve all US interests and objectives in Southwest Asia. To have a reasonable chance of success, a strategy for the region--or any region for that matter--must depend upon a whole host of political, economic, and military instruments available to the United States. Moreover, the strategist must decide which instrument or instruments should be given the most emphasis in order to achieve US goals. This is particularly true in the case of Southwest Asia. As a number of analysts have pointed out, domestic coups, insurrections, instability within authoritarian and monarchical regimes, civil disturbances, political succession problems, revival of indigenous military rivalries, and domestic instability associated with too rapid economic modernization that clashes with traditional Islamic values are all more likely threats to Southwest Asian security than a direct Soviet military invasion. US political and economic instruments can better deal with these "more likely" threats. A military strategist accepts this situation, but at the same time realizes that the United States must have the capability to respond to the more worst case situations because an inability to respond in effect increases the likelihood that they may occur. Deciding how much emphasis to place upon political, economic, and military instruments in a particular situation or region is the most difficult--and often most misunderstood--part of a strategist's job.

The idea of distribution also applies specifically to the development of a military strategy. As used here, distribution does not imply that the defense budget necessarily should be divided equally among the three uniformed services in an effort to achieve some sort of artificial balance or that each service should be represented equally in a military operation. Rather, the concept of distribution suggests that assets should be systematically--not randomly or equally--apportioned

in an attempt to achieve some end. In other words, the military strategist must decide and then recommend to political decisionmakers what is the proper proportion or mix among the services that would provide the best opportunity to achieve US interests and objectives. The mix and which service should have primary responsibility for a particular contingency should vary depending on the theater of operation, threat, and objectives to be obtained. For example, the US Army and Air Force have the primary responsibility in Europe because in the event of conflict in that theater they would play the dominant role with the navy supporting them. The opposite is true in the Pacific, and, as a result, the US Navy is the dominate service there.

In Southwest Asia, naval forces will constitute a major part of the forces necessary to achieve US objectives. However, contrary to the arguments made by naval unilateralists, one can still advocate the need for a strong navy and believe that carrier task forces are important, but, at the same time, believe that US military strategy for Southwest Asia must be based on more than a maritime strategy. Naval forces in the region can do many things, but they cannot accomplish all US objectives.

Naval forces, particularly "over the horizon" forces which can be rapidly reinforced to establish superiority in the Indian Ocean, will help achieve deterrence. Critics argue that naval forces do not demonstrate a strong commitment because they can be withdrawn just as rapidly as they can be deployed. This is true. Nevertheless, "over the horizon" forces would have to be considered by a prudent Soviet planner. To the extent that they convince the Soviets that the American commitment to Southwest Asia is real and the risk of challenging that commitment cannot be calculated or possibly controlled, deterrence will be enhanced.

Naval forces in Southwest Asia will also contribute significantly to US war-fighting capabilities. The ability to obtain naval superiority in the region

would help to keep the sea lines of communication open and facilitate the arrival of other reinforcements (air, marine, army, and navy). Naval air could fly some interdiction. However, distance factors cut both ways and adversely impact on US capabilities as they do on the Soviet Union. I have argued elsewhere that range limitations of Soviet Frontal Aviation aircraft, when studied in conjunction with the distances that the Soviets would have to operate over in Iran, create serious military constraints for the USSR.³³ However, similar problems would affect US capabilities. The primary attack plane of US aircraft carriers is currently the A-6, Intruder. It has an unrefueled range of only 700 miles and a refueled range of 950 miles: this does not reach very far into the Persian Gulf.³⁴ The range considerations are even more significant when one realizes that naval officers will be unwilling to risk high value platforms like aircraft carriers by sailing them into the Persian Gulf when air superiority is in doubt and they may be vulnerable to land-based missiles. In other words, naval forces, including naval air, would be hard-pressed by themselves to confront invading Soviet land forces in Southwest Asia.

To some degree naval forces' inability to keep Soviet ground forces out of Southwest Asia may be an unjustified criticism because maritime strategy supporters and horizontal escalationists are not really arguing that naval forces will face aggression at its point of inception. Rather, they propose to punish the USSR so badly at some other point on the globe that the Soviets will stop their aggression and withdraw. As a declaratory peacetime strategy, these suggestions may have some merit in contributing to deterrence. However, as a warfighting strategy, too heavy a dependence upon a naval oriented horizontal escalation approach suffers from three glaring problems.

First, such a strategy implies an escalation of objectives from a limited objective to stop Soviet aggression at some point on the globe to the "ultimate"

military defeat of the USSR. Rather than working to limit the scale and scope of conflict, the risk is that by increasing the points of friction between the superpowers the possibility of nuclear escalation will increase. Second, how, where, and when do the superpowers stop fighting if a strategy of horizontal escalation is executed and it is successful? Suppose an attack on Soviet naval bases on the Kola Peninsula or the Far East maritime provinces engages enough Soviet forces to stabilize a Southwest Asian conflict making it possible to defend the region's oil facilities? Could the United States or the Soviet Union negotiate a settlement when US and USSR military forces are engaged in an area of vital Soviet interest or must the USSR also be defeated on the original secondary front? Third, if American objectives in the region are to keep oil flowing over the long term and to insure that the region does not fall under the dominance of hostile outside powers, it is extremely difficult to justify a strategic equation that argues American objectives would be served by taking some area that is important to the USSR like Angola or Cuba. This might serve American political needs for retribution, but a military strategy is supposed to facilitate the achievement of US interests and objectives. Retribution should not be the goal of a strategist.

A naval oriented strategy for Southwest Asia can accomplish some objectives, but it cannot accomplish everything. Ultimately, to defend not only the oil fields but also the more vulnerable pumping stations and loading facilities from an external attack requires ground forces and a viable air defense system forward of what one intends to defend. In the pursuit of a balanced military strategy, it is not an issue of naval power versus air and land power. As Robert Komer, the former Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, has said, they "are not viable alternatives but indispensable corollaries. We need both."³⁵

If the strategist functioned in an unlimited resource environment, he would recommend building all the divisions, planes, and ships, as well as strategic

mobility assets that were required. This is unrealistic, however, because resources are constrained. Therefore, in the development of forces for Southwest Asia, when inevitable tradeoffs among programs must occur, the strategist should look toward creating a balance in US capabilities. This means increasing strategic mobility assets because of current shortfalls in those areas. In every crisis in Southwest Asia during the last 14 years, the United States has been able to send enough naval forces into the area to establish naval superiority.³⁶ The major limitations on Soviet naval power in the Indian Ocean (a lack of staying power, little offensive punch in the fleet, and limited power projection capabilities because of too few modern logistic ships) will not be significantly improved by the end of the 1980's or probably the mid-1990's.³⁷ Therefore, the United States in crisis periods will probably be able to continue to establish naval superiority for limited periods by drawing down forces from other theaters. The same cannot be said with assurance for land forces if strategic mobility assets are lacking. For this reason, in the pursuit of a wise distribution of assets and forces to achieve US military strategy, when hard choices about expensive high visibility hardware programs must be made (e.g., CVN's, B-1, MX, M-1, AH-65, etc.), those programs ipso facto should not be given precedence over less glamorous strategic mobility assets. If the United States is unable to support and sustain its forces in Southwest Asia, it will be driven toward options like nuclear or geographic escalation and the risks of such options have been discussed above. Moreover, no one has ever done well in predicting where the next crisis will occur (prior to 1978 how many people predicted that Southwest Asia would dominate US defense planning in the 1980's?). Strategic mobility assets can be used anywhere.

Supportable

Finally, a military strategy must be supportable not only in logistical terms, as has been mentioned, but also in a domestic political context. If the American

public is unwilling to support a military strategy, the forces to bolster the strategy will probably not be procured in congressional budgetary debates and the strategy will lack the political will to be executed in a crisis. Earlier it was argued that a credible military strategy for Southwest Asia requires an alliance approach. It is equally important that a supportable military strategy for the region have an alliance backing.

The reason that alliance cohesion is necessary is rather simple. As was noted at the beginning of this paper, insuring the flow of Persian Gulf oil is an indirect vital US interest, but it is critical for US allies economic survival. As a global nation and the most militarily powerful adversary of the USSR, the United States has a responsibility as well as a need not to think in myopic ethnocentric terms. Nevertheless, if, in the future, the United States is required to use military force in the region to defend objectives which in the short run are more important to its allies but in the process puts at risk American survival interests, it may not be too much to ask that before undertaking such steps that our allies support such a venture.

It probably would serve no useful purpose in noncrisis periods to threaten allies with the ultimatum that, if they refuse politically to support American approaches, they must go it alone. That would not serve either US or our allies interests. Besides, many of the issues which appear to divide America from its allies both in and outside Southwest Asia are differences of opinion over means not ends. In a crisis many of the perceived differences could evaporate. However, in the final analysis, the United States needs to avoid a repeat of the 1973 Middle East War when some European allies not only refused to support US actions, but also actively worked to undermine US policies. If it is concluded that allies would not politically (or hopefully militarily) support the use of US military force in a Southwest Asian crisis, then the military strategist may have no other realistic

choice but to advise US policymakers not to use military force. To do otherwise would be to suggest high-risk military alternatives that ultimately would falter because the American public would lack the political will to see them through.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it seems worthwhile to reiterate some basic points made in this paper in order to highlight important issues and to avoid misinterpretations. First, US interests and objectives for Southwest Asia, or for that matter any geographic region, should guide the creation of a military strategy. The threat is an important input for the development of a military strategy, but it should not be the sole determinant of a military strategy. Also, the strategist must guard against suggesting alternatives and proposals which may achieve objectives in the region, but in the process put at risk more fundamental national interests such as survival or create unnecessary friction among other global or regional objectives that are equally important. In Southwest Asia, deterrence is the primary objective, not only because of the severe military problems that the United States would face if it had to fight a major conflict in the region, but also because obtaining a major US objective of maintaining the flow of oil depends on deterrence. To fight to defend oil inherently means not only will disruption occur, but also it will be some time before the flow of oil can be resumed. The oil facilities, particularly pumping stations and storage areas, are extremely vulnerable to military operations.

Second, the process of developing a military strategy and the forces to support it is not an attempt to reject other alternatives and to advocate the use of military force to achieve US interests and objectives. Most analysts of Southwest Asia recognize that the immediate problems in the area are political and economic in nature. Their solutions depend upon political and economic options and military strategists can and do support these nonmilitary initiatives. However, a military

strategist is charged with additional responsibilities and does not do the decision-maker justice if he does not look beyond economic and political solutions. His job is to suggest to political decisionmakers a military strategy (or strategies) within realistic force levels that will deter the USSR and other nations from using military force to threaten US interests and objectives and that will create an environment in which political and economic options can be pursued. Additionally, if deterrence fails, the military strategist has the responsibility to advise decisionmakers how military force can or cannot be used effectively to defend US interests and objectives and reestablish deterrence. In other words, the process involved is not an either/or situation with choices only between political or economic solutions versus military options. To be successful in Southwest Asia and the world at-large, US economic, political, and military strategies must be integrated and mutually supportive.

Finally, for a military strategy to have a reasonable chance of success, it must be credible, realistic, distributional, and supportable. Since the fall of the Shah and the invasion of Afghanistan, four major military strategies for dealing with US military deficiencies in Southwest Asia have been suggested: nuclear, conventional tripwire, conventional defense, and geographic escalation. While each proposal has fulfilled some of these principles, none adequately address all of them. Except for the Wohlatetter version of a conventional defense option, all the others suffer from the same major strategic vulnerability: namely, they are either a unilateral, nonalliance attempt to deal with Southwest Asia or, according to one school of thought among geographic escalationists, an attempt to manipulate and leave allies with no options but to support US actions.

Some critics will argue that I placed too much emphasis upon allies, alliance backing, and collective action in the development of a military strategy for the region. They will claim that there is no guarantee that in a crisis that allies

will support US policy. There will be some merit to those criticisms for no strategy is risk-free. However, there is equally no guarantee that the American public will or should bear the financial burden required if the United States tries to build a military capability for unilateral action in Southwest Asia. Even if we could afford it, I would still place more emphasis upon collective vice unilateral action. An alliance approach threatens to create geographic escalation in ways that are believable to the Soviets. Rather than geographic escalation occurring because of US military weakness at the point of primary friction, other nations would expand the conflict because Soviet actions threatened their forces in the region or their interests and objectives. Besides, in the long run, the United States is defending objectives which are more crucial to its allies. Under these conditions, an alliance approach is more acceptable to an American public which traditionally has greater interest in domestic than foreign affairs issues.

ENDNOTES

1. See for example, Joshua M. Epstein, "Soviet Vulnerabilities in Iran and the RDF Deterrent," International Security, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 1981, pp. 126-158; Keith A. Dunn, "Constraints on the USSR in Southwest Asia: A Military Analysis," Orbis, Vol. 25, No. 3, Fall 1981, pp. 607-629; Challenges for US National Security: Assessing the Balance--Defense Spending and Conventional Forces, a preliminary, Part II, prepared by Carnegie Panel on US Security and the Future of Arms Control, Washington: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981, pp. 149-194; and Thomas L. McNaughter, "The Military Threat to the Gulf: The Operational Dimension," paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Section on Military Studies, International Studies Association at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, November 5-7, 1981.
2. John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 285.
3. The New York Times, January 24, 1980, p. A12.
4. For a few statements of Reagan Administration commitment, see Department of State, "Middle East Regional Security," Current Policy No. 270, Washington: Bureau of Public Affairs, March 23, 1981; Department of State, "US Strategy in the Middle East," Current Policy No. 312, Washington: Bureau of Public Affairs, September 17, 1981; Department of State, "Pursuing Peace and Security in the Middle East," Current Policy No. 332, Washington: Bureau of Public Affairs, October 21, 1981; and Caspar W. Weinberger, "Requirements of our Defense Policy," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 81, No. 2052, July 1981, pp. 46-48.
5. Christopher Van Hollen, "Has the Persian Gulf Passed Its Prime?," The Washington Post, December 27, 1981, p. D7.
6. For more information on the concept of direct and indirect vital interests, see William O. Staudenmaier, Strategic Concepts for the 1980's (Special Report), Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, May 1, 1981, pp. 4-6.
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8. Maxwell D. Taylor, Precarious Security, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976, p. 17.
9. Amos A. Jordan and William J. Taylor, Jr., American National Security: Policy and Process, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, p. 54.
10. For more on the difference between operational planning and force development planning, see Staudenmaier, "The Strategic Process: Considerations for Policy and Strategy in Southwest Asia," pp. 20-24.

11. The 1979 DOD study--also referred to as the Wolfowitz Report--is summarized in Richard Burt, "Study Says a Soviet Move in Iran Might Require US Atomic Arms," The New York Times, February 2, 1980, pp. A1 and A4. See also Kenneth N. Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," International Security, Vol. 5, No. 4, Spring 1981, pp. 49-73 which refers to the Wolfowitz report extensively.

12. Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," p. 66. Emphasis in original.

13. Ibid., p. 67.

14. Ibid., pp. 49-50 and 71-73.

15. Wohlstetter, "Meeting the Threat in the Persian Gulf," Survey, Vol. 25, No. 2, Spring 1980, p. 165.

16. Jeffrey Record, The Rapid Deployment Force and US Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf, Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc., 1981, p. 3.

17. Wohlstetter, "Meeting the Threat in the Persian Gulf," pp. 170-183.

18. Record, The Rapid Deployment Force, p. 64.

19. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

20. For a good articulation of this position, see Francis J. West, Jr., "Conventional Forces Beyond NATO," in National Security in the 1980's: From Weakness to Strength, ed. by W. Scott Thompson, San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1980, p. 324.

21. See Richard Halloran, "Reagan Selling Naval Budget as Heart of Military Mission," The New York Times, April 11, 1982, p. A24 where Secretary of Navy John Lehman is reported to have stated that planning for a regionally limited naval war with the USSR is impossible: "it will be instantaneously a global naval conflict."

22. Fred Charles Ikle, "NATO's First Nuclear Use: A Deepening Trap?," Strategic Review, Vol. VIII, No. 1, Winter 1980, p. 23.

23. John F. Lehman, Jr., "Rebirth of a US Naval Strategy," Strategic Review, Vol. IX, No. 3, Summer 1981, p. 14.

24. Ibid. Note that the Secretary makes no mention of allies and their potential contribution in naval superiority. Emphasis added.

25. Francis J. West, Jr., "NATO II: Common Boundaries for Common Interests," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXXIV, January-February 1981, p. 63.

26. Dov S. Zakheim, "Towards a Western Approach to the Indian Ocean," Survival, Vol. XXII, No. 1, January/February 1980, p. 13.

27. Ibid., p. 14.

28. For more detailed analyses to support the arguments about Soviet military constraints, see Dunn, "Constraints on the USSR in Southwest Asia," pp. 607-629; and Keith A. Dunn, "Power Projection or Influence: Soviet Capabilities for the 1980's," Naval War College Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 5, September-October 1980, pp. 31-48.

29. Keith A. Dunn, "'Mysteries' About the Soviet Union," Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 1982, pp. 374-376.

30. Bruce W. Watson, Red Navy at Sea: Soviet Naval Operations on the High Seas, 1956-1980, Boulder: Westview Press, 1982, p. 148.

31. See Herschel Kinter, "The Reagan Defense Program: Can It Hold Up?," Strategic Review, Vol. X, No. 2, Spring 1982, pp. 26-29; William R. VanCleave, "Strategy and the Navy's 1983-1987 Program: Skepticism Is Warranted!," Armed Forces Journal International, April 1982, pp. 49-51, and Report of Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger to the Congress on the FY 1983 Budget, FY 84 Authorization Request and FY 1983-87 Defense Programs, Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1982, p. III-36.

32. When the SL-7 container ship is converted to a roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro) configuration, it will be able to carry 122 tanks of the M-1 type and a mixed variety of 183 helicopters. Alternatively, a converted SL-7 will be able to carry a maximum of 183 tanks or a mix of 332 helicopters. If loaded at time of crisis, a ship can deploy to the Persian Gulf via the Suez Canal in 11½ to 12 days or 15 to 17 days if the Canal is closed. It would take approximately 20 hours to load a ship and 16-18 hours to unload at a port. If the environment is not benign, it could take as much as 2½-3 days to off-load. Given the distances involved, these are rather impressive statistics. However, the United States has bought and is in the process of converting only 8 SL-7's at this time. Conversion should be completed by the end of 1983. US Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for FY 1982, Hearings, 97th Cong., 1st sess., Part IV: Sea Power and Force Projection, Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1981, pp. 1823-1824.

33. Dunn, "Constraints on the USSR in Southwest Asia," pp. 614-616 and 619-625.

34. Thomas L. McNaugher, "A US Military Posture for the Gulf," paper presented at the International Studies Association, Cincinnati, OH, March 24-27, 1982, p. 15.

35. Robert W. Komer, "Security Challenges of the 80's," Armed Forces Journal International, November 1981, p. 69. See also Robert Komer, "Maritime Strategy versus Coalition Defense," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 60, No. 5, Summer 1982, pp. 1124-1144.

36. Watson, Red Navy at Sea, pp. 150-151.

37. Dunn, "Power Projection or Influence," pp. 31-45.

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